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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Colorado consumers targeted in new insurance scam

Denver – Colorado consumers, and Medicare beneficiaries, need to be on the alert for a new insurance scam that targets their personal information and bank accounts. Colorado’s Senior Medicare Patrol (SMP), a national program funded by the U.S. Administration on Aging, but administered by the Department of Regulatory Agencies’ (DORA) Colorado Division of Insurance, has recently received calls on this new problem. The Federal Trade Commission is also aware of the scam, noting that all consumers can be targeted, not just Medicare beneficiaries.

Scammers call, often from a Texas area code such as 402, greeting the person by name. The caller already knows the person’s address, phone number and, in some instances, banking details. The scammer, claiming to be calling from the government or Medicare, says that the person is being issued a (nonexistent) new national medical card or a new Medicare card as part of the implementation of the Affordable Care Act (federal healthcare reform) in 2014. In order to finalize the new card, the scammer asks for banking information such as a bank routing numbers and accounts.

“So far, the beneficiaries reporting this scam to SMP have not become victims, but they have been concerned enough to report the incident,” said Alice Ierley, SMP Program Director. “We need to alert people to this so that they keep up their guard. We expect similar scams to pop up as the 2014 implementation date for healthcare reform approaches.”

The FTC has issued a blog post warning consumers about this scam and how people can protect themselves - www.consumer.ftc.gov/blog/variations-scheme.

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Remember that scammers are interested in your personal information including social security numbers, driver's license numbers, and banking information. Unless it is a trusted source, never provide any personal details to anyone before you check them out. If asked for this information – and it is not a trusted source - then hang-up the phone and take the following actions. Keep details such as name of caller, telephone number, location of the caller and provide this information to investigators.

1. Report the call to the FTC - 1-877-FTC-HELP / www.ftccomplaintassistant.gov.
2. If you are a Medicare beneficiary, report the incident to the Colorado SMP fraud hotline, 1-800-503-5190. Know that Medicare never contacts beneficiaries by phone.
3. Contact your local police or sheriff department to report the incident.
4. Report the incident to your bank and alert them to the possible scam. Ask the bank to flag your account for questionable transactions.
5. Make sure you are on the no call list.
 - National Do Not Call Registry - 1-888-382-1222 / www.donotcall.gov
 - Colorado No Call List – 1-800-309-7041 / www.coloradonocall.com

The Senior Medicare Patrol, SMP, empowers seniors and others to address Medicare fraud, billing errors and program abuse. The program uses volunteers to educate community members on preventing, detecting and reporting fraud. In Colorado, it is administered by DORA's Division of Insurance. For more information visit www.dora.colorado.gov/insurance and click on "Medicare / Senior Health."

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DORA is Colorado's consumer protector. A part of DORA, the Colorado Division of Insurance regulates the insurance industry and assists consumers and other stakeholders with insurance issues. DORA is dedicated to preserving the integrity of the marketplace and is committed to promoting a fair and competitive business environment in Colorado. Consumer protection is our mission.